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Programme implementation and future programme of work of the Secretariat in the field of population

Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2005: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report reviews the progress achieved by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat in implementing its programme of work in the field of population in 2005. It covers the activities of the Population Division dealing with the analysis of fertility, mortality and international migration; world population estimates and projections; population policies, population and development interrelationship; and monitoring, coordination and dissemination of population information. The report provides highlights of the major activities of the Population Division — technical publications, wallcharts, expert meetings, training and dissemination of results, including through the Internet.

The objective of the subprogramme in population is to increase understanding of the nature of demographic phenomena, in particular the interrelations between population and development. The Commission on Population and Development provides intergovernmental guidance to the subprogramme.

The Commission may wish to take note of the report.

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I. Introduction

1. The subprogramme on population in the United Nations Secretariat is the responsibility of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005 was formulated on the basis of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/57/6/Rev.1). The programme of work takes into account the recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the outcomes of other relevant international conferences and summits. The programme of work also responds to the resolutions and decisions of the Commission on Population and Development, as well as relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

2. As described in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, the objective of the subprogramme in population is to increase understanding of the nature of demographic phenomena, in particular the interrelationships between population and development. The Commission on Population and Development provides intergovernmental guidance to the subprogramme.

3. Specifically, the expected accomplishments for the subprogramme in population, as presented in the programme budget for 2004-2005 (A/58/6 (Sect. 9)), are:

(a) Increased understanding and awareness of Member States and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, of the issues in the field of population and development, such as international migration, population ageing and the HIV/AIDS pandemic;

(b) Improved and timely access by Governments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to the United Nations population estimates and projections, as well as other research findings in the field of population and development, in print and via the Internet.

4. The Population Division continues to collaborate closely with agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of the work programme and in connection with the follow-up activities to the International Conference on Population and Development. United Nations missions, national Government offices, United Nations offices, researchers and the public regularly consult the Population Division regarding data, information and analyses on population and development issues.

5. The present report deals with the research and other activities carried out by the Population Division during 2005. The report provides a substantive summary of the activities and outputs of the Population Division — technical publications, wallcharts, expert meetings and dissemination of results, including through the Internet. A list of activities and outputs is contained in the annex.

II. Fertility and family planning

6. The Population Division has issued the wallchart *World Contraceptive Use 2005*, which shows the most recent data on selected contraceptive practice

indicators. For 157 countries, as well as for the world development groups, major areas and regions, the chart presents the number of women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in union and the percentage of those women using contraception by method used. According to those data, 61 per cent of all women of reproductive age who are married or in union are using contraception. The level of use is higher in the more developed regions, where 69 per cent of the women are using contraception compared to 59 per cent in the less developed regions. Among the latter, Africa has the lowest level of use, with only 27 per cent of women of reproductive age who are married or in union using contraception. By contrast, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have levels of use similar to that of the more developed regions. In the less developed regions, contraceptive use has increased substantially over the past decade. Contraceptive prevalence increased by at least 1 percentage point per year in the majority of the developing countries. By contrast, prevalence remained fairly stable at high levels in developed countries.

7. The Population Division also issued *World Contraceptive Use 2005* on CD-ROM, including two datasets. The first dataset presents the most recent estimates of contraceptive prevalence by method of contraception used, for the world, the development groups, major areas, regions, and countries. The second dataset presents trend data on contraceptive prevalence in countries for two points in time between 1990 and 2005.

8. The Population Division has prepared the *Database on Marriage*, which contains indicators of marital status for 202 countries or areas. For the most recent dates available, the database provides indicators of the percentages of men and women that are single, currently married, divorced or separated and widowed. The database also includes the mean age at marriage.

III. Mortality and health

9. The Population Division is issuing the *World Mortality Report 2005*, which provides a broad overview of mortality changes in all countries of the world during the latter half of the twentieth century. The main objective of the report is to compile and summarize available information about levels and trends of mortality and life expectancy for national populations. It is the first report of its kind produced by the Population Division. Previous studies have analysed levels and trends in mortality covering all regions of the world and there have been other compendia of detailed mortality statistics. However, the *Report* is the first attempt to document mortality levels and trends across the full age range for all countries of the world. It includes an explicit comparison of mortality estimates from a variety of sources, and provides a useful starting point for future studies of mortality levels and trends in all countries of the world.

10. The *Report* presents a compilation of estimates of key mortality indicators for 192 countries and areas, including all countries with a population of 100,000 or greater in the year 2000. Data are taken from a wide variety of sources. Emphasis is placed on official estimates of mortality indicators provided by countries to the United Nations, supplemented by estimates obtained from other databases, population censuses and nationally representative surveys.

11. In addition to the important compilation of mortality estimates, the *Report* permits an assessment of gaps in information. It provides crucial insights, especially

given the ongoing efforts to combat child mortality and HIV/AIDS so as to reach the Millennium Development Goals and the need for data to validate progress made in those areas.

IV. International migration

12. The Population Division organized an expert group meeting on international migration and development from 6 to 8 July 2005. The meeting brought together about 90 experts and Government representatives and provided a forum for the substantive exploration of key aspects of international migration and development with the aim of seeking concrete ways to realize the benefits that international migration can have for development. Topics included the economic impacts of international migration; the increasing relevance of skilled migration; the development effects of migrant remittances; and the management of migration flows. The migration experience of selected countries in different world regions was also reviewed. All material relating to the meeting is available on the Population Division website.

13. The Population Division organized a fourth coordination meeting on international migration on 26 and 27 October 2005. The meeting brought together over 50 participants from the United Nations Secretariat, the regional commissions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, as well as other intergovernmental, international and regional bodies active in the area of international migration. The meeting focused on the implications of the report of the Global Commission on International Migration and its recommendations for the work on international migration of the United Nations system and for the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held in 2006. Participants also exchanged information on recent activities of their organizations that are most relevant for the high-level dialogue or that should be considered in the substantive preparations of the high-level dialogue. All material relating to the meeting is available on the Population Division website.

14. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/208, the Population Division prepared the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The report reviewed the subject, purpose and content of the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development, and suggested organizational details.

15. The Population Division issued a database entitled *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision*, which contains a revised and expanded set of estimates of the number of international migrants by sex in each country or area of the world for 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995 and 2005. The estimates indicate that the number of international migrants in the world increased from an estimated 78 million in 1965 to 190 million in 2005. The estimates are derived mostly from data on the number of foreign-born persons enumerated by censuses or by population register. The database also includes the population in each country or area for each reference year, the growth rate of the number of international migrants in each country over each quinquennial period, the percentage of international migrants in the total population, the percentage of female migrants among all international migrants and the percentage distribution of international migrants by major area or region.

16. The Population Division is finalizing the *International Migration Report 2005*. The *Report* is the second in a series that presents information on international migration levels and policies as well as other related indicators for major areas, regions and countries of the world. The number of the indicators in the *Report* is larger than that of the previous issue and includes data by sex, when possible. In addition to information on migrant stock, number of refugees and workers' remittances, information on Government positions concerning international migration and whether a country is party to United Nations instruments is included for each country.

V. World population projections

17. The Population Division has completed the publication and distribution of the results of the *2004 Revision* of the biennial *World Population Prospects*. The demographic estimates and projections for 228 countries of the world, its regions and major areas provide a comprehensive picture of demographic trends between 1950 and 2050. According to the medium variant, the world population will continue to grow, increasing from 6.5 billion in 2005 to 9.1 billion in 2050. The projections also show the increasing diversity of population dynamics among the countries and regions of the world. Currently, 95 per cent of all population growth is absorbed by the developing world and 5 per cent by the developed world. By 2050, according to the medium variant, the population of the more developed countries as a whole would be declining slowly by about one million persons a year and that of the developing world would still be adding 35 million annually, 22 million of whom would be absorbed by the least developed countries.

18. The results of the *2004 Revision* have been issued in three volumes (vol. I, *Comprehensive Tables*; vol. II, *Sex and Age Distribution of the World Population*, and vol. III, *Analytical Report*) and a wallchart. Results have also been made available in electronic form on three CD-ROMs (Basic Dataset, Comprehensive Dataset, and Extended Dataset) and on the Population Division's website via a user-friendly database.

19. Volume I of the *2004 Revision*, *Comprehensive Tables*, presents demographic profiles and selected demographic indicators for each development group, major area, region and all countries of the world for the period 1950 to 2050. Volume II, *Sex and Age Distribution of the World Population*, shows the age and sex distribution of populations for each development group, major area, region and country of the world. Estimates are presented for 1950-2005 and projected values thereafter in three variants differing according to projected fertility. The tables are accompanied by an executive summary discussing the results and assumptions underlying the *2004 Revision*. The executive summary is given in the six official languages of the United Nations.

20. Volume III, *Analytical Report*, provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the *2004 Revision*. It contains chapters on: (a) population size, distribution and growth; (b) population age composition; (c) fertility; (d) mortality, including the demographic impact of HIV/AIDS; and (e) international migration. The volume also contains a chapter on the methodology applied and the assumptions used in preparing the demographic estimates and projections, as well as a chapter that documents the data sources used and the estimation methods applied for each

country and each basic demographic variable. Each of the three volumes is accompanied by an executive summary of the results in the six official United Nations languages.

21. The Population Division has completed work on preparation of the *2005 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects* and its results are being published. In addition to the comprehensive report, the findings of the latest round of estimates and projections of urban and rural areas and of urban agglomerations are being made available on the Population Division website (www.unpopulation.org) and on CD-ROM. Two wallcharts and an executive summary issued in all the official languages of the United Nations are being prepared. The *2005 Revision* confirms that the world's urban population is growing faster than the total population of the world. A majority of urban dwellers live in small and medium-sized settlements, while about 5 per cent of the world's population live in mega-cities with more than 10 million inhabitants.

22. The population estimates and projections prepared by the Population Division provide the basic information for understanding a wide range of population and development issues and increasing awareness of those issues. They are being used throughout the United Nations system and by academia, educational institutions, civil society and the media.

23. The Population Division organized an expert meeting on software for demographic projections of HIV/AIDS at United Nations Headquarters on 10 and 11 May 2005. The objective of the meeting was to evaluate, compare and improve procedures for the estimation and projection of the demographic impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Participants discussed demographic and epidemiological models, as well as methods and assumptions for producing internationally comparable projections, with the objective of identifying key areas of further improvement so as to produce demographic estimates and projections that better reflect the impact of the ranging dynamics of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in different settings.

VI. Population policies

24. The publication *World Population Policies 2005* will be issued in 2006. The study finds that Governments view HIV/AIDS as the most significant demographic issue facing them. Its survey of population policies indicated that 88 per cent of developing countries and 79 per cent of developed countries consider HIV/AIDS as the most pressing population and development issue. Among the developing countries, high infant and child mortality and high maternal mortality are the second and third most important issues. The size of the working-age population, adolescent fertility, low life expectancy, spatial distribution, high fertility and population growth are the other concerns identified by developing countries. In contrast, in developed countries, in addition to HIV/AIDS and infant and maternal mortality, the major population concerns are low fertility, population ageing and the small size of the population of working age. Both developing and developed countries share a concern regarding the working-age population but for different reasons. In developed countries, the concern relates to the expected shortage of workers because of prevailing low fertility and population ageing, whereas in developing

countries the concern usually arises from a surplus of workers owing to previous high fertility and rapid population growth.

25. Evaluation and analysis of the *United Nations Ninth Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development* has been completed. Responses from 98 countries, comprising more than 80 per cent of world population, have been received. The results of the quinquennial *Inquiry* have been incorporated into *World Population Policies 2005* and other publications of the Population Division.

26. The wallchart *International Migration 2005* provides background information for the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Population and Development, as well as for the 2006 high-level dialogue of the General Assembly on international migration and development. The wallchart presents the latest policy information on international migration for all countries and regions of the world. It presents information concerning Governments' views and policies on international migration and the status of ratification of United Nations instruments relating to international migration. It also includes estimates of migrant stock, i.e., the number of international migrants, as well as net migration flows and the number of refugees and workers' remittances.

27. The wallchart *Population and HIV/AIDS 2005* was issued in 2005. The chart provided an essential backdrop to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held on 2 June 2005 and focused on combating the epidemic. The high-level meeting reviewed national and international responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, four years after the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. The wallchart presents the latest available data and information on HIV/AIDS for all countries and regions of the world, with emphasis on Government policies and programmes for the prevention of the disease and on the treatment, care and support of persons affected by it. The wallchart shows that Governments are raising public awareness of the need to avoid risky behaviours. However, Government responses to date remain inadequate to address the severity of the epidemic. Risky behaviour continues to be common despite the comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention strategies that have been implemented. Programmes to promote condom use are widespread but supply shortages and poor quality persist. Efforts to ensure blood safety have improved considerably. Antiretroviral treatment has significantly prolonged the life and reduced the suffering of AIDS victims, but too few infected persons have access to such treatment.

28. A study entitled *Child Adoption: Trends and Policies* is currently under way and will be issued in 2006. Data have been collected for 194 countries, including information on the national legislation governing child adoption, age requirements for adoptive parents and the number of domestic, intercountry and step-parent adoptions. In addition to the analysis of various issues related to child adoption, the publication provides a one-page country profile for each of the 194 countries for which information was collected.

29. The study shows that although the number of child adoptions has steadily increased in recent years the majority of adoptions are concentrated in a small number of countries. The study also indicates that the majority of adoptions are domestic, with over 80 per cent of all adoptions being undertaken by persons who are citizens of the same country as the adopted child. The number of domestic adoptions has, however, been declining in many countries. The dwindling supply of

adoptable children, which has been attributed to women's increased capacity to control their fertility and to societal changes that make it more acceptable for unmarried women to look after their own children, may to some extent explain the phenomenon. At the same time, the number of intercountry adoptions has been rising both in absolute terms and as a proportion of all adoptions. During the past decade, the number of intercountry adoptions has sharply increased and in many Western European countries intercountry adoptions now constitute the majority of all adoptions.

30. The study also examines the relations between demographic trends and child adoption. It considers, for example, whether high levels of childlessness and the greater tendency of unmarried persons to raise children on their own may lead to a rise in the demand for children for adoption. The study also discusses the relation between divorce and trends in stepchild adoptions.

VII. Population and development

31. An expert group meeting on the social and economic implications of changing population age structures was convened by the Population Division, in collaboration with the Consejo Nacional de Población of Mexico and with the support of the National Institute on Aging of the United States of America. The meeting was held in Mexico City from 31 August to 2 September 2005. Four main topics were considered during the meeting: (a) how changing age structures affect economic growth; (b) the implications of population ageing for social security and pension systems; (c) the impact of ageing on health systems; and (d) the importance of intergenerational transfers for the support of older persons. The meeting showed that most developing countries can still benefit from the "demographic bonus" associated with the increasing proportion of persons of working age relative to the proportion of children and older persons. The proportion of the working age population has been increasing in many developing countries as a result of the substantial declines in fertility that began in many cases in the 1970s. Participants considered the institutional settings and public policies required for countries to benefit from the bonus period. The meeting also addressed issues related to the coverage and sustainability of social security and pension schemes, including the low levels of coverage in many parts of the world and the measures that Governments are taking to modify pension systems so as to reduce or control the projected strains on public budgets that population ageing will bring. Population ageing also poses challenges for health systems because increasing resources will need to be devoted to the health care of the older population, whose medical needs are very different from those of the young. Of particular concern are developing countries that are still struggling to combat high rates of childhood disease and lack the resources to make even basic health-care services universally accessible to their populations.

32. In relation to the broader topic of social protection, participants considered public and private intergenerational transfers, with special emphasis on the role of family transfers, as the main source of support for a large share of the older population in the less developed regions. Changes in population age structure can have a major effect on the intergenerational distribution of resources.

33. The proceedings of the meeting are being prepared and will provide input to the fortieth session of the Commission on Population and Development, to be held in 2007, whose special theme will be "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development".

34. A new version of the database *Population, Resources, Environment and Development* was recently released on CD-ROM. It includes selected indicators from the United Nations world population estimates and projections and from *World Population Policies*, both prepared by the Population Division, as well as economic, social and environmental indicators from other international organizations. In addition to updating the information contained in the previous version of the database, the new version of the database includes data on additional indicators, such as the literacy levels of young adults and revised school enrolment indicators. It also includes improvements to the user interface. An Internet version of the database and user interface have been designed for release in 2006.

35. The publication *National Trends in Population, Resources, Environment and Development: Country Profiles*, which presents, for each country, a set of time-series indicators on population trends and policies, labour force, education, economic and social development, land, water and energy use, is nearing completion. It updates and expands a previous version issued in 1997; the data are drawn from the *Population, Resources, Environment and Development* database.

VIII. Monitoring, coordination and dissemination of population information

A. Monitoring of population trends and policies

36. The Population Division updated and issued the latest edition of its annual monitoring report presented to the thirty-eighth (2005) session of the Commission on Population and Development. The topic of the report is "Population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty". The report has been issued in the six official United Nations languages. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the state of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, considering the biological, social and related determinants of the disease; its effect on mortality, population growth and orphanhood; its relationship to migration and geographic mobility; its interaction with fertility and sexual behaviour; national policies to prevent infection and to provide treatment and care for persons living with AIDS; and its relationship to development and poverty.

37. The Population Division issued *Population Challenges and Development Goals* in time for the 2005 World Summit. The publication contains updated versions of two documents that had been presented to the Commission on Population and Development at its thirty-eighth session. It presents an overview of demographic trends worldwide, including those on population size and growth; urbanization and city growth; population ageing; fertility and contraception; mortality, and international migration. It also includes a section on population policies, in which the concerns and responses of Governments with respect to major population trends are summarized. In part two, it considers the contribution of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in all its aspects, to the achievement of the

internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It thus made a contribution to the Summit by reviewing population trends and emphasizing the contribution that population issues could make to development.

38. During 2005, the Population Division prepared the world population monitoring report for the thirty-ninth session of the Commission. The subject of the report was international migration and development, a timely subject in light of the forthcoming high-level dialogue on international migration and development that the General Assembly will hold in September 2006. The report will be updated following the thirty-ninth session of the Commission, based on the Commission's deliberations, and will be issued as a sales publication in time for the high-level dialogue.

B. Dissemination of population information and data

39. During 2005, the Population Division continued to update and expand its website (www.unpopulation.org) in order to provide timely access by Governments and civil society to population information. The Population Division website provides, among other things, information recently issued in Population Division publications. All or selected parts of publications are posted on the website, including highlights, key findings, proceedings of meetings and wallcharts. New items on the Population Division website include reports on world population projections; living arrangements of older persons; HIV/AIDS; international migration and population ageing. The website also includes documents of the Commission on Population and Development.

40. Complementing the Population Division website in providing easy and timely access to population information is the Population Information Network (POPIN). POPIN (www.popin.org) provides a portal to the wealth of population information and data available throughout the United Nations system. Analysis of the traffic to the POPIN website shows that POPIN is a major channel for the dissemination of the population information generated by the United Nations, with the annual number of visits surpassing half a million.

41. The Population Division continues to maintain an e-mail announcement service, alerting subscribers of the release of new Population Division publications or data. The service currently has over 1,200 subscribers, including subscribers from over 70 developing countries.

42. *MORTPAK for Windows*, the Population Division's software package for demographic estimation, has continued to be disseminated for worldwide teaching and research purposes. Information on Population Division activities and outputs of particular relevance to developing countries is also regularly distributed via other mailing lists so as to reach a variety of constituencies.

Annex

Publications, expert group meetings and other materials prepared or organized by the Population Division (1 January-31 December 2005)

Expert group meetings

United Nations expert meeting on software for demographic projections of HIV/AIDS, New York, 10 and 11 May 2005.

Expert group meeting on social and economic implications of changing population age structures, Mexico City, 31 August-2 September 2005.

Fourth coordination meeting on international migration, New York, 26 and 27 October 2005.

Expert group meeting on international migration and development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 29 November-2 December 2005.

Research studies

World Population Monitoring 2003: Population, education and development. ST/ESA/SER.A/228. Sales No. E.03.XIII.12.

World Fertility Report 2003. ST/ESA/SER.A/234. Sales No. E.04.XIII.10.

Living Arrangements of Older Persons Around the World. ST/ESA/SER.A/240. Sales No. E.05.XIII.9.

World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, CD-ROM Edition, Basic Dataset. ST/ESA/SER.A/243. Sales No. 05.XIII.10.

World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision. ST/ESA/SER.A/244.

Population, Development and HIV/AIDS with Particular Emphasis on Poverty: The Concise Report. ST/ESA/SER.A/247. Sales No. E.05.XIII.3. (Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.)

Population Challenges and Development Goals. ST/ESA/SER.A/248. Sales No. E.05.XIII.8.

World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, CD-ROM Edition, Comprehensive Dataset. ST/ESA/SER.A/249. Sales No. 05.XIII.11.

World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision, CD-ROM Edition, Extended Dataset. ST/ESA/SER.A/250. Sales No. 05.XIII.12.

Population Bulletin of the United Nations: Policy Responses to Population Decline and Ageing. Special Issue Nos. 44/45 2002. ST/ESA/SER.N/44-45. Sales No. E.02.XIII.4.

World Fertility and Marriage Database 2003 (CD-ROM). POP/DB/Fert/Rev.2004.

Key Mortality Indicators (CD-ROM). POP/DB/MORT/2005.

Seminar on the Relevance of Population Aspects for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, ESA/P/WP.192.

United Nations Expert Meeting on Software for Demographic Projections of HIV/AIDS, ESA/P/WP.194.

Wallcharts

World Fertility Patterns 2004 (wallchart). ST/ESA/SER.A/238. Sales No. E.04.XIII.12.

Population and HIV/AIDS 2005 (wallchart). ST/ESA/SER.A/241. Sales No. E.05.XIII.2.

World Population 2004 (wallchart). ST/ESA/SER.A/242. Sales No. E.05.XIII.4.

Periodicals

Population Newsletter, No. 78 (December 2004).

Population Newsletter, No. 79 (June 2005).